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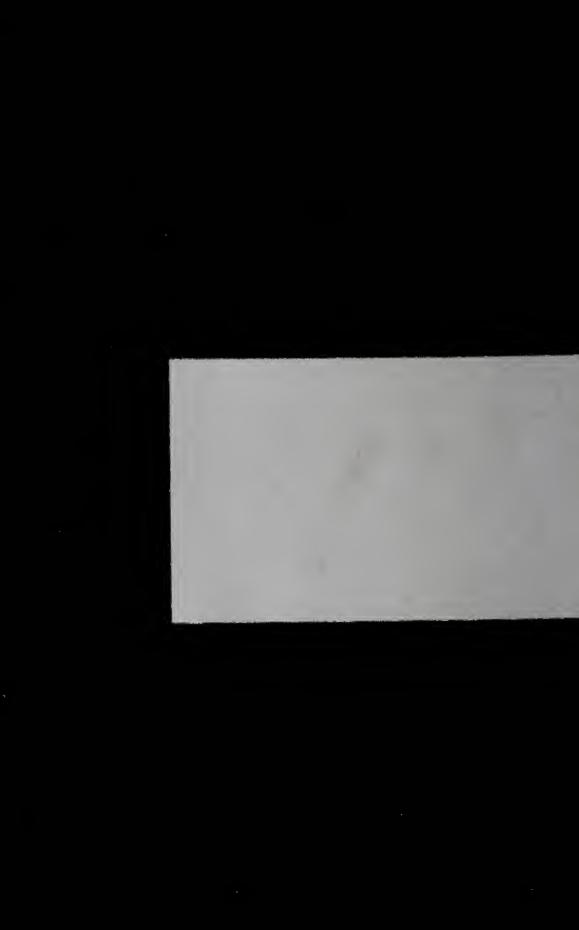
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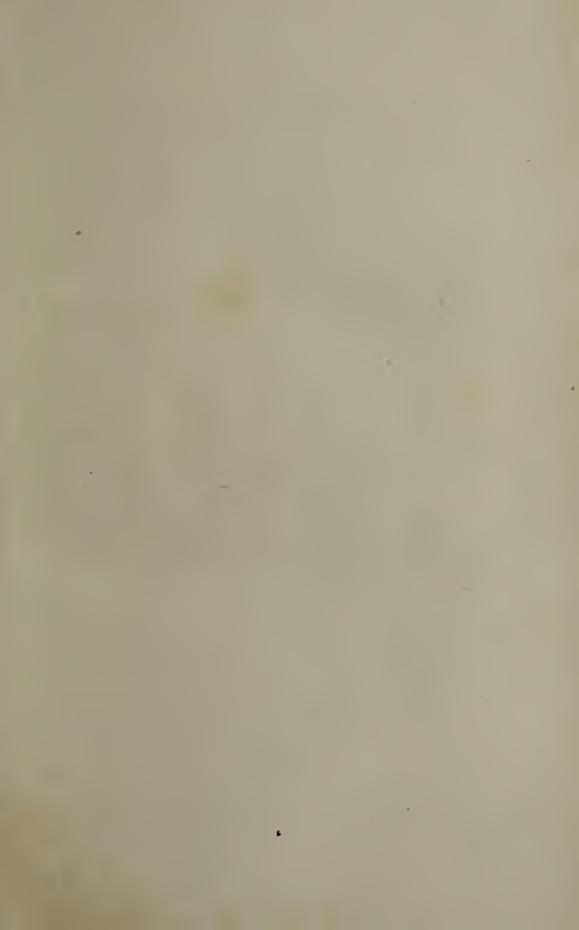




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"HE FILLED A BLACK PIPE WITH TOBACCO AND SULLENLY SAT DOWN TO SMOKE."—PAGE 33.

### III Chiebal

## JOHN BENTLEY'S

MISTAKE.

BY

MRS. M. A. HOLT.

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## JOHN BENTLEY'S MISTAKE.

### CHAPTER I.

A TALK IN THE CORN-FIELD.

OW long these rows of corn are!" said Sidney Bentley, leaning wearily against a friendly stump that chanced to stand about in the centre of his father's corn-field.

He evidently expected a reply; but his brother, who was a little taller than himself, did not seem to notice this remark, but kept on about his work. Sidney waited a full minute for an answer, and then said again: "I wonder if we ever shall get this field of corn finished."

"Not unless you work faster than you have this morning, Sid," replied the brother, as he heaped the mellow earth around the rank corn-stalks, that were so green and beautiful. "The fact is, Sid, you are getting lazy, and unless you smart up a little, it will take us a whole week to hoe all of this corn;" and, saying this, Frank Bentley stepped briskly along to another hill.

"Perhaps if I was as large and strong as you are, Frank, I could keep up with you without your having a single hill

of corn in my row; but as it is, it is pretty hard work for me to do as much as I am obliged to. I wonder if father intends for us to finish hoeing all this corn alone?" And the boy looked rather sadly over that portion of the field that still remained to be hoed.

"Of course he does, Sid; for don't you see him and Tom over in the hay-field yonder? I heard him say this very morning that he was behind with his work, for all of the grass was ready to be cut, and that the oats were ripening fast. I know that father will not stop to help us any, so we might as well make up our minds to do it ourselves. There is no getting out of this job, Sid, so let

us submit as cheerfully as we can to our fate," and Frank made the shining spade fairly fly around the corn-hills.

"Well, it is too bad any way," replied Sidney, going to work again, "for I know that no other boys in the whole neighborhood have to work as we do."

"I know that, Sid, just as well as you do," answered Frank a little less cheerfully; "but we have got to submit to it all, so we might as well make the best of it."

"I shall not always submit to it, Frank; for, if I cannot be treated like other boys, I'll run away," answered Sidney in a resolute way.

"And jump out of the frying-pan into

the fire, as the old saying is," said the brother, a little surprised at the unusual tone that Sidney adopted.

"I don't believe that I should be any worse off than I am now," replied the boy, "for I am a perfect drudge in every respect, and never have an hour for myself. It is work, work, from morning until night, and I am heartily sick of it. If I could occasionally have a half-holiday, like Edward Grey, I would never say a word. He has at least one holiday in each week, in which he can do just what he pleases, while I have not had an hour this summer to spend as I chose. I don't just understand it, though, for Edward Grey's father is not

worth half so much money as I know my father has got. Do you know, Frank, what makes such a difference between Mr. Grey and father?"

"No, I do not quite understand it, Sid; but people are not all alike, you know. There is old Jim Martin, that is not like anybody else in the whole world. He is the most like a brute of anybody that I know of—"

"He would be all right if he would let liquor alone, I guess," exclaimed Sidney, interrupting his brother.

"But he never will let it alone," was the reply; "he loves it too well."

"I should think he would, though, because it makes Mrs. Martin, Joey, and

Ruthie all so wretched. Why, Joey and Ruthie have no clothes at all, only what the neighbors give them. They cannot go to Sabbath-school or anywhere else. And I know that they do not have enough to eat near all of the time. Don't you remember that snowy day last winter when Joey came to our house so cold and hungry, and asked mother for some bread to carry home?"

"Yes, Sid, I remember it all; and so, don't you see that Joey is a great deal worse off than you are, even if Edward Grey does have a little easier time generally than you do? I tell you, I should much rather be in our own places than in such a condition as Joey and Ruthie

Martin. They don't see many pleasant days, I can tell you, and I think it is a good deal worse to be pounded by a drunken man and go hungry and half-clothed, than it is to be obliged to work hard."

"So do I," answered Sidney, in a little lower tone of voice than what he had used before. "Yet I don't see why Mr. Martin can't let liquor alone when he knows what work he is making. I would not touch it if I was in his place, I know."

"If you were in his place, you would undoubtedly do just as he does, for I have heard Mr. Grey say that it is not a very easy task to leave off drinking," said Frank.

"I wonder how Mr. Grey knows anything about it? He never drank a glass of liquor in his life, and does not think it is right even to take a glass of harmless cider. Father calls him a temperance fanatic, and says he goes clear beyond reason with his strange notions. I am sure that Mr. Grey is a good man, and I don't see what makes father dislike him so much." And Sidney looked somewhat puzzled.

"I guess that father does not dislike him, Sid, but he don't believe just as Mr. Grey does in regard to drinking wine and cider. Father, you know, has got a number of barrels of cider in the cellar for our own use, and some home-made wine, which is saved for company. Mr. Grey thinks it is an awful crime to use either wine or cider, and I guess he told father so one day, and this is what made the disagreement. I don't believe it is wrong to drink a little home-made wine or cider; I wish I had a good drink now," and Frank looked wishfully toward the hay-field, where he knew there was a jug of cider.

"There are three at work over in that field," he continued, "and I really believe the new-comer is old Jim Martin. Yes, I know it is, for no other man in town wears such a coat as that."

"I know what he came to work for father for; he knows that he can get all

of the cider he wants. He would not work for Mr. Grey, because he could not get anything to drink there but cold water, and he don't think much of that. I heard Mr. Grey offer him a dollar and a half a day if he would come, and the old fool has come here, while father will only give him one dollar. Is it not strange?" said Sidney.

"Not a bit," answered Frank, "for he thinks a great deal more of cider than of money."

"I should not think that father would let him have any cider," observed Sidney, thoughtfully; "for, after he drinks that, he always goes to the hotel for whiskey."

"Not always," replied Frank, laughing; "for sometimes old cider makes him so drunk that he cannot get there."

"I did not know that cider ever made anybody drunk," exclaimed Sidney in surprise. "If it does, I don't believe that it is right to drink it, any more than Mr. Grey does."

"Of course, if you drink enough of it," replied Frank; "but one or two drinks of cider will not harm you. Old Jim does not know when to stop. The more he drinks, the more he wants."

"Then it is not right for him to drink any," said Sidney decidedly.

"No; I think he would be better off not to touch it at all," replied Frank; "I hope that he will not get on a regular 'spree,' just as he did last year, in haying time. Do you not remember it, Sid?"

"I shall never forget it, I guess," answered the boy half sadly. "But did he begin that sad spree by drinking cider at our house?"

"Yes," replied Frank reluctantly, "but father never dreamed how it would be; if he had, I am sure he would have looked out."

"I should not think he would let the old toper have any this year, then; I'll watch and see if he does," said Sidney.

Just then the cheerful-sounding dinnerbell rang, and the boys started gladly toward the large farm-house.

### CHAPTER II.

A PEEP INTO THE DRUNKARD'S HOME.

HE old house which the Martins occupied was not a very pleasant one, for it had been going to decay a number of years. It had a fine location, however, upon a slight

hill that overlooked the pleasant little village of Greenville, which was about a half a mile away. Only one farm lay between the drunkard's home and the little hamlet that nestled down in the

quiet valley. This was owned by Mr. Grey, of whom we have already spoken. His house was very much unlike that in which James Martin lived, for it was a model of beauty and comfort, and at once revealed the fact that its owner was a man of good taste, and not a sloven. People who passed along by these two houses could not help noticing the difference between them; and they generally shook their heads while passing the drunkard's home, and said, "Poor Mrs. Martin!" It was a little strange that nobody ever seemed to pity old Jim, not even when he suffered long and severely with pain and disease.

"He ought to suffer," some would say,

while others said, "He has brought it all upon himself"; and so poor old Jim did not get much pity or sympathy from anybody. Nobody loved or even respected him, and so the poor man found it a very easy matter to drift along toward ruin. Yet, strange to say that all the gloomy shadows that clustered around the pathway of James Martin had gathered there in the brief period of half a dozen of years. He was once a happy, useful man, but he became a slave to strong drink, so shame and misery soon overtook him. He was not one of the kind that can caress the deadly wine-serpent for years before they finally perish, for he went the

downward road very swiftly. The home that was once filled with peace and happiness soon became the abode of misery and wretchedness, and the drunk-'. ard's wife became a pale, silent woman. Hope did not forsake her at once, for at times her husband seemed kind and half happy, a little as he did in the early years of her married life. She tried to hope that some kind power would yet save him, and lead him back to honor and usefulness again. But the long shadowy years went by, and all of the time he was growing more reckless and heartless. So he had become a loathsome, wretched drunkard, covered with rags and shame, caring for nothing but

strong drink. But Mrs. Martin still tried to do her duty, as far as she was able, in caring for little Joey, who was about eight years old, and Ruthie, who was only four. Joey was a bright, active boy, while Ruthie was a pale, fragile child, very much unlike the happy, joyous children who filled other homes.

Mrs. Martin, Joey, and Ruthie were seated around the little pine table upon which was found their plain supper. All seemed more sad and thoughtful than usual, and nothing was said until Joey began:

"I do hope that father will not get to drinking as he did last year in haying time." "I am afraid that he will, my son," answered Mrs. Martin, in a low voice.

"I wonder what made him go to Mr. Bentley's to work? Mr. Bentley never pays him as much as any one else would give him, and yet he goes there every time he can get a chance. What makes him, mother?"

"Mr. Bentley always gives his hired men cider, Joey. This is what makes him go there so readily, I suppose," replied Mrs. Martin.

"I should not think that Mr. Bentley would give father any cider, when he knows it makes him behave so badly," said Joey.

Mrs. Martin made no reply to this;

and so Joey asked, "Is Mr. Bentley a good man; mother?"

"What made you ask such a question, my son?" enquired Mrs. Martin, looking at the sober, thoughtful face of her boy.

"Because I thought, if he was a good man, he would not give father cider to drink," answered Joey.

"He thinks that he is good, undoubtedly," said Mrs. Martin; "and I suppose people generally call him so," she added.

"Yes, I know they do," said Joey; "and I suppose it is because he goes to church every Sunday and appears so good. But I like Mr. Grey a great deal better than I do him, for he never gives father any cider, and he don't

believe it is right for anybody to drink it."

- "I wish there were more men in the world like Mr. Grey," Mrs. Martin only said.
- "I wish everybody was like him!" Joey exclaimed; "then there would not be any drunkards like father, and every one would be happy."
- "Sometimes people are unhappy—those who know nothing about drunkards or drinking liquor," replied Mrs. Martin.
- "I know that we should be happy if father did not drink liquor," said Joey, in a decided manner.
  - "We should be happier than we are

now, no doubt. But as it is, we must trust in God and hope for the best," answered Mrs. Martin, a little more hopefully.

"I wish that I could go to Sabbath-school like the rest of the boys," said Joey, after a few moments of silence. "If I had good clothes like Frank and Sidney Bentley, I would go."

"You will soon be large enough to earn money, my son, and then you can buy some better clothes," answered Mrs. Martin.

"And I'll buy you and Ruthie some too, so that we can all go to Sabbath-school and church. And I'll buy some new chairs, a new table, and a lot of

things." And the little boy seemed to forget all present sorrows in his thoughts of a happy future.

Mrs. Martin smiled a little sadly, but said quite cheerfully, "God grant that you may be a blessing to us, Joey," and here they all arose from the little table.

Mrs. Martin soon removed the few dishes from the table, and in a short time her simple household duties were all performed, and then she took her place by the open window to finish some sewing that she was doing for the family of Mr. Grey.

Mr. Grey and his good wife were very kind to Mrs. Martin and her children, for they were continually bestowing

favors upon the drunkard's family in many ways. First, all of the sewing that Mrs. Grey was unable to do was given to Mrs. Martin, for which she was amply repaid. Then Mr. Grey in some way found many light chores and errands which Joey was very glad to do, for the little boy always received his pay in full. The kind father also would often go, when Mr. Martin was crazy with liquor, to keep him from doing harm to his wife and children. Many a hard, cruel blow he had saved them; for, sad to tell, the wretched drunkard did not hesitate to strike his wife, son, or even frail little Ruth, when his passions were excited by strong drink.

It was well for Mrs. Martin and her helpless children that they had such friends and neighbors as Mr. Grey and his good wife.

Mrs. Martin sat by the low window and sewed swiftly until the approaching twilight admonished her that her day's labor was nearly completed. A few stitches more she took, and then she rolled up the garment which she had completed, bidding Joey take them over to Mr. Grey's. The boy started directly upon his errand, while Mrs. Martin led little Ruthie to her sleepingroom, which was just out of the kitchen. Soon the pale sweet face of the child was. resting upon the snowy pillow, and then,

as the mother bent her head to receive the good-night kiss, two little slenderarms twined themselves about her neck, and the low word "Mamma" greeted her ear.

"What, darling?" Mrs. Martin said, as she kissed the half-parted lips again and again.

"Will papa whip Joey and me just as he did before, when he worked for Mr. Bentley?" enquired the child, in a low, half fearful voice.

"I hope not, little darling," the mother answered, while her eyes filled with tears at the remembrance of a fearful scene that took place only a few weeks before.

The child still clung to her mother,

and her little heart beat very fast, as if the danger of the past was not over yet.

"I'll ask God to take care of us all," she said again.

"God will take care of us if we ask him, Ruthie," answered Mrs. Martin, unclasping the little hands.

Another kiss the mother pressed upon the sweet lips, and then she turned softly away. The child soon forgot her fears, as the balm of all sorrow, sleep, stole over her. It was well that she could forget them even for a little while.

"Will better days ever come?" sighed poor Mrs. Martin, as she sat in the dim twilight, looking towards the cheerful

of Mr. Grey's house. Just then she heard heavy steps, and soon she saw her husband coming slowly along. She knew at once that he had drunk enough cider to render him cross and disagreeable. She wondered why he did not go onward to the village tavern, as he usually did after drinking cider at Mr. Bentley's.

"Perhaps Mr. Bentley did not pay him to-night for his day's work," she said to herself as he opened the door.

He kicked over a chair before he had got to the shelf upon which lay his pipes and tobacco, although he had to step aside to reach it. Then he filled a black pipe with tobacco, and sullenly sat down to smoke. Soon the room was filled with the disgusting fumes of the burning weed.

"Make me a cup of strong coffee, Sue," he said at last, in a cross, commanding voice.

"There is no coffee, James," Mrs. Martin replied in a low voice.

"I know you lie," he said, while his eyes fairly shone with anger. "And if you don't stir yourself around and make it pretty soon, you'll get yourself into a pretty muss."

"We have not had any coffee for more than a month, James," the wife replied. "Well, then, start that lazy brat of yours down to Dicks's after some," he said again, in a threatening voice.

Just at that moment Joey entered the room, and the father ordered him away to get the coffee.

"Tell Mr. Dicks that I will pay him for it soon," said Mrs. Martin, as she turned her head to hide the tears that would come.

It was a long walk for poor tired Joey, yet he started manfully away. He returned in a little while, but his half-drunken father was sleeping soundly.

## CHAPTER III.

## MORE TROUBLE—THE SIGNAL.

HE morning came at last, bright, sunny, and beautiful. Mrs. Martin was up in good season to prepare for the duties of the day. She had passed a sleepless night, for the

dark clouds of coming trouble seem to cast their shadows before. After awhile her husband also arose, and prepared to go to his work at Mr. Bentley's. He appeared very much as he did the night

before, only maintaining a sullen silence. Filling a huge box with tobacco, and thrusting a pipe into his pocket, he went away, not appearing to notice his wife.

For a long time Joey and Ruthie slept on, knowing nothing about the beauty and glory of the fair summer morning. They did not hear the sweet bird-songs that trembled on the fresh, pure air, or see the fragrant flowers glistening in the bright morning sun.

"I will let them sleep, for they will awake to a sense of their sad condition soon enough," said Mrs. Martin, half aloud.

The breakfast was awaiting them

when little Joey came down the stairs, rubbing his eyes as if he was only half awake. Then a low call from Ruthie's room was heard, and soon they were all seated around the table again. After the plain breakfast was eaten, the large Bible was taken from the shelf, a chapter read from its sacred pages, and then all bowed in prayer. The mother offered up a brief, simple prayer to God, asking him to watch over them all that day, and protect them from danger. She also asked his blessing to rest upon the absent husband and father, and to lead him back unto the ways of peace.

Joey attended the village school, and

wards the pleasant white school-house that stood just out of the busy portion of the town. Just as he arrived opposite the house of Mr. Grey, Edward came out and joined him, and together they walked toward the village.

Edward was a firm friend of little Joey, and seemed to take especial pains to watch over and care for him. If the school-boys ever attempted to injure Joey or say unkind words to him, they were always silenced by Edward.

"I am glad that I do not have to work like Frank and Sidney Bentley," said Edward to Joey, as they walked along.

'I should rather be in their place than in my own," answered Joey, thinking of his cheerless life.

"I am real sorry for you, Joey, and I wish that I could help you in some way, and may be I can when I get a little older," said Edward, in a low, sympathizing tone of voice.

"If father did not drink liquor, I should not need any help," replied Joey.

"I know it," said Edward; "and I am very glad that my father does not drink liquor. And I will never touch it either. I shall sign a temperance pledge the first chance I get."

"So will I," said Joey; and then he added in a lower voice, "I am afraid

that we shall have another sad time at our house in a day or two, for father has gone to work for Mr. Bentley. He gives him just enough cider to get it to going well, and then father goes down to Smith's to get whiskey."

"I should think that Mr. Bentley would be ashamed of himself, to let your father have cider to drink. But if he does have such a spree, you just come over to our house and stay, and tell your mother and Ruthie to come, too"—and Edward stopped to see if Joey would agree to such a plan.

"I don't know how that plan would work. I am afraid that father would be very angry and perhaps half-kill

us when we went back," answered Joey.

"I am afraid that he will kill you entirely if you stay within his reach," said
Edward; "but if he should come home
crazy with drink, you just hang this
white handkerchief out of your chamber
window; I'll be on the watch, and if I
see it I'll tell father, and he will start
at once for your house."

"Yes, I can do that; strange that we never thought of it before"—and a look of relief came over Joey's face.

The day passed away, and after school was ended Joey went directly home, as if to prepare for some coming calamity.

Just as the sun had disappeared from

view in the western sky, James Martin came from Mr. Bentley's very much in the same condition as the night before. This time, however, he went directly toward the village tavern, never even once looking toward his own house.

"I am afraid that we shall have trouble to-night," said Mrs. Martin to Joey.

"I have been thinking about it ali day, mother," he answered. "If we could only send little Ruthie away somewhere, so that he cannot harm her, I should be very thankful. Why can't we take her up to Mr. Grey's, mother?

"I am afraid that it would not answer, my son: for if he should guess our reasons in sending her away, he would be far worse. Then, perhaps, he may not be fully sober in a whole week. We will all remain here and trust in God."

Little Ruth went to bed at the usual hour, but Joey sat by the window a long time, thinking over the past and wondering if better days would ever come. It was a bright moonlight night, and the boy thought that everything appeared strangely beautiful in the calm brightness that rested over the earth. He could not sleep, he knew, and so he maintained his watch by the window

"I wonder if Edward would see the signal if I should hang it out to-night.

He will go to bed and be soundly sleeping when father comes," he sighed.

The clock struck nine, ten, and eleven, but still the faithful watcher sat by the open window.

"Father will come pretty soon, for Smith will shut up for the night now," he thought.

He was not mistaken, for soon he heard heavy footsteps, and as he looked out he saw his father staggering along. He thought it a little strange that he had not heard him before he had got so near home, but the truth was the drunken man had come very quietly past the house of Mr. Grey. He was a little afraid of the strong farmer, for

more than once he had been bound by the hands of Mr. Grey. But after he had reached his own door he began to sing a vile bar-room song, occasionally stopping to utter a loud oath.

"Where are you, old woman?" he called out in a loud voice. "Please get up and pay your compliments to your husband, before I help you out of bed," and saying this he began to sing again.

"What do you wish for, James?" said Mrs. Martin, stepping into the room.

"Oh! you had not gone to bed, then," he replied. "I'd like to know what business you have sitting up until this time of night. Watching to see if I come home drunk, ha! I'll teach you

better than that "—and then he seized the poor woman and struck her savagely.

"Don't, James, please don't," she gasped.

"Stop your snivelling, or I'll beat your brains out," he said, advancing towards her. "But I know how I'll pay you off," he said, starting towards the door of Ruthie's room. "I'll just knock the brat's brains out instead of your'n."

Joey had hung out the white handkerchief the moment he had heard the low threat of violence, and with a beating heart he awaited the result.

"I wonder if Mr. Grey will come," he groaned, as he heard his father enter Ruthie's room.

A loud scream from below came to his ears, followed by a horrid oath; and just then he saw Mr. Grey running swiftly toward the house.

Another scream and oath sounded out upon the air of night just as Mr. Grey opened the door.

"What are you about, James Martin?" he exclaimed, rushing into the bedroom, where a strange, cruel sight met his view.

"Only trying—to—rule—my—own—house—hold—you know," answered the drunken man.

Little Ruth lay upon the floor pale and motionless as marble, while the red blood flowed from a wound upon her forehead.

Mrs. Martin also lay upon the floor trying vainly to arise to her feet.

For a moment Mr. Grey felt sick and faint, but it was only for a moment; and then he sprang like a tiger upon the drunken wretch. In a moment he was felled to the floor and securely bound, and then Mr. Grey rushed to the door and shouted loudly for help.

Some of the villagers who had not retired for the night heard the loud call, and rushed toward the drunkard's home.

Mr. Bentley, who lived a short distance the other way, also heard the cry, and started toward the scene of suffering.

The men from the village arrived first,

however, and little Ruth was carefully lifted to the bed, and then one of them ran swiftly for Dr. Ellwood.

- "What does all this mean?" asked Mr. Bentley, walking slowly into the room.
- "It means that Jim Martin has been drinking cider over to your house," answered Mr. Grey, in a stern voice.
- "I guess that he has been drinking something more than cider," said Bentley, with a look of unconcern upon his face.
- "Yes, he ended off with some of Smith's bad whiskey; but he began yesterday by drinking some of your harmless cider. Bentley, that cider has

made cruel work here, and I hope, as you are a Christian man, that you will not offer him any more."

"I did not offer him any—he helped himself to it; and he might have had just such a spree if he had never touched a drop of cider."

"I should hate to stand in your shoes, John Bentley, as far as this matter is concerned," said Mr. Grey, turning away.

Just then the door opened and Dr. Ellwood came hurriedly in. He was followed by Mrs. Grey and one or two other neighbors.

Mrs. Martin had not received any serious injuries, but the little girl had a broken arm, and an ugly wound was found upon her brow. The wretch had

seized her by her slender arms, and hurled her against a large trunk that stood close by. He would undoubtedly have killed her had not Mr. Grey arrived just when he did.

"This is bad business," the doctor said, after the arm had been set, and little Ruth made as comfortable as circumstances would admit.

"If I had only been a minute sooner, I could have saved all this," observed Mr. Grey. "But the truth is, the sly wretch went very quietly past my house so that I would not hear him. I had been watching for him, but, thinking that I should hear him when he went by, I suffered myself to go to sleep. But Edward was watching for a signal that

Joev was to give in case of trouble, and the moment he saw it, he gave the alarm, and I started."

"This signal of Joey's undoubtedly saved the girl's life. One more blow like the one she received would have killed her, for at best she is a frail little body." And saying this, the doctor rose to go.

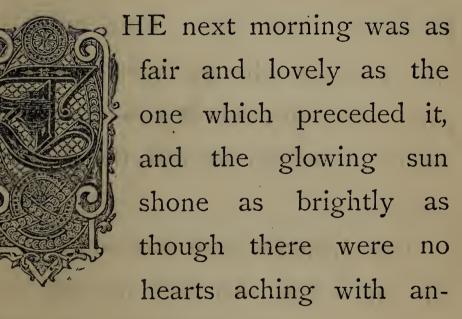
The drunken man was soundly sleeping upon his own bed, for out of pity some of the men had lifted him from the hard floor.

Mr. Bentley took his leave, looking a little crestfallen.

After he had closed the door, farmer Grey said: "I would not be in his place for all the money he ever saw"

## CHAPTER IV.

THE DRUNKARD'S PROMISE.



guish in the drunkard's home.

Mrs. Martin was nearly crushed with sorrow, as she saw her sweet child suffering with the fierce pain that caused every nerve and fibre to quiver with anguish.

Little Joey also wept and sobbed as if his heart would break, and nearly all night he sat in one corner of the room in which Ruthie lay, moaning in a piteous manner.

At last Mrs. Grey persuaded him to retire to rest, and, when the daylight was breaking in the east, he forgot his sorrows.

Mrs. Grey looked in upon him once after he slept, and saw the pearly tears still flowing down his pale face. "Poor boy," she said, as she stooped to kiss the innocent brow.

Little Ruth also slept, but every moment she would start up and cry out with pain. Once Mrs. Grey heard her

say, "O papa! please do not hurt little Ruthie," and then she moaned wearily.

The sun had risen high in the sky ere James Martin awoke. He tried to move himself, but the strong cord still held his hands firmly together, and so he found it a very difficult matter to sit upright upon his bed.

"What does all this mean?" he growled, trying to regain his liberty.

Mr. Grey, who had just stepped in to speak with his wife, who had remained with the sick child, approached him and said: "It means that you are a prisoner for the present, and will undoubtedly remain one until you promise to do better."

But James Martin did not fully comprehend the import of the words that sounded so indistinct and undefinable to him. His head felt very strangely, and his ideas were somewhat confused, and so he repeated his question.

The same answer greeted his ears, and this time he understood it better.

- "We shall see about that," he said, while he fairly gnashed his teeth in his rage.
- "Yes; we shall see," answered Mr. Grey, in a tone that the wretched man fully understood.
- "What have I done to deserve such treatment as this?" he asked, in a milder voice.

- "Enough, I should think, to make you rest easy for a while," was the reply.
- "But tell me what it is, Grey," he asked, somewhat eagerly.
- 'Yes; I'll tell you, James, although it makes my heart ache to think of it. You nearly killed little Ruth last night."
- "Nearly killed her, did you say?" gasped the man, turning pale as death.
- "Yes; nearly killed her," repeated Mr. Grey. "You broke one of her arms, and left an ugly gash upon her head."

The father tried to hide his face, and groaned sadly.

Mr. Grey was surprised at the feeling which he betrayed, and a new thought came to him.

- "I am afraid Ruthie will die, Mr. Martin," he only said, for he wanted to see what effect these words would have upon him.
- "Die, did you say?" And the voice of James Martin sounded strangely unnatural.
- "Yes; die, I said," answered Mr. Grey, in a low voice. "She is a very frail child, you know, and cannot bear much. And then, I have sometimes thought that she is too sweet a child to long remain upon the earth. An angel should live with angels, you know, James; but I do not want to think that she was killed by her own father."
  - "Stop, Grey," said the agonized man,

in a hoarse whisper; and here the scalding tears ran swiftly down the red, bloated face.

Mr. Grey was strangely moved, for he was convinced at last that the wretched, besotted man had a human heart after all. His test, however, had been pretty severe, yet he was not sorry that he had used it.

"See here, James," he said, as soon as he could command his voice, "you must turn over a new leaf, as the old saying is, and begin to lead a different life. You have been growing worse and worse for a long time, and something pretty serious will grow out of it unless you begin to do better; you must just

come to the conclusion to let the accursed stuff alone entirely. What do you say to this plan, James?"

"I wish I could let it alone, but you don't know nothing about the demon that rules me. You have never been a slave to strong drink, Grey. I tell you I cannot resist it when I am tempted at every step I take." And here the poor man groaned sadly.

"Shun temptation, James. Do not go into a single place where you are in danger of being tempted. Turn away from the deadly poison as you would from a dangerous serpent. This is your only hope of salvation, James—by turning away from temptation, and trusting in

God for help and strength. You can be a man again by adopting the right course to follow." And the voice of Mr. Grey expressed as much hope as did his words.

"But nobody will help me in any way," replied James slowly. "Every one knows what a disgusting object of humanity I have become. Nobody respects me, and I am sure no one will ever trust me again. No, no; let me go to ruin as quick as I can. As soon as you release me, I'll go where I shall not torment my family to death. The grave will soon cover my shame."

"No; that is not the way to do, James. You must stay and atone for the wrongs

you have done. And if you will promise me here and now that you will try and live a better life, I will trust you and assist you in every possible way. I will give you steady employment, and pay you good wages. So now make up your mind."

"I wish I could do better," fairly gasped the man, while a look of hope came into his eyes.

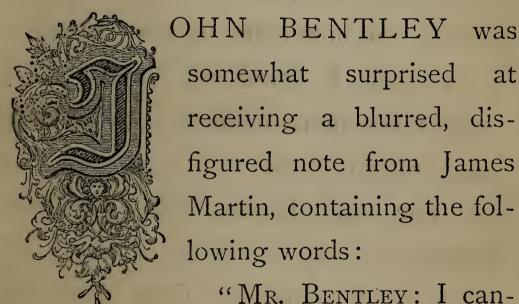
"You can, James, and then little Ruthie and Joey will be so happy."

"I will promise you, Grey, God help me." And James Martin sank back upon his pillow.

In a moment more the cords that bound his feet and hands were severed, and he was free.

## CHAPTER V.

## FARMER BENTLEY'S PROMISE.



Martin, containing the fol-"Mr. Bentley: I can-

not work for you any more. I am going to work for Mr. Grey, so look for somebody else. J. Martin."

"I wonder what it all means," he said, after reading it. "Jim is an old fool at

best." And a frown came over his face.

"Whom is it from, father?" enquired Frank, who at once suspected that something had gone wrong.

"Why, from old Jim Martin. I should think you might know without asking."

"I did not know that Jim Martin could write; I did not think he was good for anything much but to drink liquor—"

"And cider," added Sidney.

"Keep quiet, if you please," commanded Mr. Bentley half angrily.
"Now I have got to leave my work, and go after somebody else to fill Jim's place.
And perhaps I shall fail to find any one

after all. Boys, I guess you will have to go into the hay-field to-day, and let the corn go until to-morrow. You can finish hoeing it in another day, I guess. The hay must be secured right away. Do as Thomas tells you, and work as fast as you can." And the unfeeling moneyloving man arose to go.

"We can have all the cider we want to drink, anyway, that is one consolation," said Frank Bentley to his brother, as they started for the hay-field, each carrying a pitchfork, with which to turn over the hay that lay upon the ground in thick, heavy swathes.

"There is not much consolation in drinking cider, Frank," answered Sidney,

"and I am not agoing to drink a single drop of it."

"So Mr. Sidney Bentley is turning into a teetotaler, is he?" And Frank laughed loudly.

"Yes; and I shall sign the pledge the first chance I get," answered the boy firmly.

"And then go out giving temperance lectures," added Frank.

"Perhaps so," was the answer; "and the first thing I say I will tell the reason why I became a 'teetotaler.'"

"Please give me your reason; I want to know it very much."

"Well, this is the reason: 'It is not a safe practice to drink anything that is stronger than cold water, and so the only true way to do is to never touch anything that leads to the bad habit of drinking liquor."

"Is it not safe to sometimes drink cider and wine, Mr. Temperance Lecturer?" asked Frank.

"It is not always, for, if Jim Martin had not drunk cider here yesterday, he would not have gone to Smith's after whiskey last night."

"How do you know that he went to Smith's last night?" enquired Frank.

"Because I heard father and Thomas talking about it this morning, and I heard father say that they had a terrible time over to Martin's, and something

about Ruthie. I could not understand it all, but I am afraid that Joey or Ruthie is hurt pretty badly. This was what made me decide not to drink any more cider. I never thought much about it before, for I thought, if it was wrong to drink cider, father would know it."

"I guess he would know it if there was anything very wrong about it. But I hope old Jim did not harm Joey or Ruthie in his drunken spree last night." And Frank Bentley spoke in a more serious tone of voice.

"I don't see why he did not come back here to work again," said Sidney. "He is generally very willing to come when we want him, which is not often." "He undoubtedly has not got sober enough yet to work."

"But he was sober enough to write a note to father, and I am sure he could work," answered Sidney.

"Well, I do not just understand it; but it will undoubtedly appear plainer some time." And saying this, Frank jumped briskly over a high fence into the hay-field.

Sidney followed him, and soon both boys forgot all about the drunkard and his family in their pleasant work of scattering about the fresh fragrant hay.

Dinner-time came at last, and the hungry boys rushed toward the house at the first sound of the dinner-bell.

Mr. Bentley had just arrived before the boys, and a dissatisfied expression was resting upon his face.

"We are in a pretty fix now," he said, after awhile; "and I do not see just how we are agoing to get out of it. I have spent the whole day thus far in trying to find a man to help us, but nearly every man that I went to see had already hired out. Paul Jones and David Williams were the only two that would say a word about coming, and they each wanted a dollar and a half per day."

"I thought that every man asked that except Jim Martin, and he takes the fifty cents less in cider," said Sidney.

A half-frown came over the father's

face, and he said sternly, "Please keep quiet while I am talking."

After a few moments of silence, he said again: "You boys will have to remain in the hay-field until I can find a hand to help me. Jim Martin will not make anything by going off in this way. Grey has had something to do with it, and I shall tell him a few things one of these days."

Just then a low rap upon the door was heard, and little Joey Martin stepped timidly into the room.

- "Please, Mr. Bentley, Ruthie wishes to see you a little while," he said.
- "What did you say, sir?" enquired the farmer, very much surprised.

- "Ruthie wishes to see you," the boy repeated.
- "Wishes to see me? You are mistaken, boy."
- "No, I am not; for she has kept asking for you ever since she waked up this morning. Please, will you go home with me?" asked Joey pleadingly.
- "I am very busy, and I don't see how I can," answered Mr. Bentley uneasily.
- "She don't want to see you only a minute," the boy insisted; "and she will feel very badly if you do not come."
  - "What does she want?" he enquired.
- "I don't know, but I guess it is something about father."
  - "She is undoubtedly out of her head,

and don't know what she does want," he answered. "I'll call in to-night, however." And Mr. Bentley turned away.

He went into the field to work, but somehow felt very uncomfortable. He tried to shake off his unpleasant feelings, but they would cling to him in spite of his efforts. Everything went wrong with the discontented man that afternoon, and the unpleasant look still rested upon his face when night came.

Very reluctantly he walked toward the house of Mr. Martin, and stood at last by the bedside of the little sufferer. He started as he looked at the pale, white face of the child, for there were the ghastly hues of death resting upon it.

He fairly shrank away from the earnest look of the child, yet she reached out one tiny white hand toward him.

"What do you want, child?" he tried to say pleasantly.

"Please, Mr. Bentley, do not give my papa any more cider," she said, in a low whisper.

The man grew pale, and he tried to free himself from the grasp of the child.

He did not answer her, and so she asked more directly: "Will you promise little Ruthie not to give papa any more cider?"

'Your father is not working for me, child," he answered her at last.

A look of relief came over her face,

but she said again: "But promise me that you will never give him any more cider." And she looked so pleadingly into his face that for a moment his cold heart was moved with compassion.

"It will be all right, child; I will not let him have any more if I can keep it from him." And here Mr. Bentley unclasped the little hand that had clung to his own so firmly, and walked swiftly away.

## CHAPTER VI.

THE DEATH SHADOW.



DARK shadow was resting over the household of James Martin, for little Ruth was lingering upon the borders of the spirit land. Whether her freed soul would wander off into the grand forever,

just beyond the shadows that had gathered around her, or still remain a prisoner in the frail casket, was yet a deep mystery. It was very evident that the slender, feeble constitution would

soon wear out, and also that it had already received a fearful shock. She grew paler and weaker every day, and seemed to be gradually fading away from the earth. Yet she never complained, but hour after hour she lay speechless upon the snowy pillow.

"There are deeper injuries than the broken arm," said Dr. Ellwood one day, as he visited his patient; "and I am afraid that she will die in spite of our efforts to save her."

He thought the child would not hear him, but he was mistaken, for she looked up, and a quiet smile came over her face.

Joey was standing by the bedside of Ruthie, and heard what the doctor had

said, and, unable to control his grief, he wept and sobbed piteously.

His sister saw it all, and for a moment a tear was seen in her blue eyes; but it was soon gone, and she whispered softly, "Joey will go too." And then the weary eyelids closed in sleep.

Mrs. Martin soon regained her calmness, and then seemed wholly resigned to the will of God. Night and day she stood by the loved child, and watched the death angel do his silent work. She shed no tear and betrayed no emotion at the sad scene that caused others to weep bitterly.

The neighbors were very kind, and came daily to render Mrs. Martin all the

assistance she needed. Everything that could be done by loving hands for the drunkard's family was cheerfully performed.

And how did James Martin appear in this trying scene? perhaps the reader will ask. If his outward grief was a symbol of that within the depths of his soul, he did truly and sincerely repent. He seemed to fully understand the great wrong he had done to his child, and his bitter tears flowed unbidden from his eyes. He could not bear to look upon the pallid face of his sick child, nor even listen to her soft, weak voice. It was something new for him to behave in this way, for always before he had been unmoved by the scenes of misery caused by himself. So all who saw him after that sad night seemed to think that the cords of pity, away down in the soul, had truly been reached at last.

But yet words of condemnation were heaped upon him, for such a deed as he had performed could not be easily overlooked. If he had shown no signs of repentance, he would have fared rather harshly in the hands of the indignant neighbors.

Mr. Grey, however, never uttered a word against the already wretched man, but spoke very kindly to him, and encouraged him in every possible way.

"You cannot undo the past, James,"

he said to him one day; "so let it take care of itself, while you look out for the future."

Martin made no answer, but turned his head away to hide the tears that came unbidden into his red, swollen eyes.

He had worked every day for Mr. Grey since his promise, and every night had carried home his wages and placed them in the hands of his wife.

At last a greater change came over the little lambkin, and then all saw that in a little while the struggling soul would be free. Her eyes shone with a clearer light, and the happy smile played oftener over her pale lips. She seldom spoke a word, but the unearthly look that filled her glowing eyes revealed it all.

It was in the dim gray light of morning when she died and gained the peaceful city of perfect day. All night had the death-dew rested upon the pale brow, and all night had her eyes glowed with the same holy lustre. They knew she was going, and so all were standing around the snowy bed. Each received a parting kiss from the little cold lips, and then a tiny hand was raised toward the far-away blue, and the glorified soul went up amid the fading stars to bask for ever in the sunlight of the great Eternal. There was grief in

the home of James Martin that night, but joy in the city of our God.

In the quiet churchyard of Greenville little Ruth Martin was laid away to await the grand resurrection morning. There were tears seen upon the rough, sunbrowed faces of men who seldom wept, as the tiny coffin was let down into the dark earth. Lightly the earth was heaped upon the "baby brow" of little Ruth, and smoothly the broken turf was laid over the slight mound.

"She was murdered," some one whispered to Mr. Grey, who lingered in the green graveyard until the "narrow house" was all completed.

- 'Who murdered her?" he asked, in a meaning tone of voice.
- "People say that her father did," was the low answer.
- "He did not do it all," answered Mr. Grey, in a firm voice. "There are others more guilty than he."
  - "Who?" was the enquiry.
- "John Bentley, who gave him cider, and Landlord Smith, who dealt out the whiskey and rum to him." And then Mr. Grey turned away.

## CHAPTER VII.

LIGHT IN DARKNESS.



WEEK had passed away since Ruthie Martin had been consigned to the grave, and in that time quite a change had been wrought in the drunkard's home. The broken chairs had been

taken to a little dark chamber above, and the cracked window-lights all removed, and new ones placed in their stead. Several other improvements had been made, such as Mr. Martin would

do in the short evenings after his day's work was completed. But in spite of the signs of better days, a shadow still lingered that partially destroyed the peace of the household band. The shadow was not caused simply because the little girl had gone up to live for ever with the angels, but the sad events connected with her death still remained so fresh in memory that the new hope of future happiness was almost crushed.

"How very happy we should have been if Ruthie had not died!" said Joey one day to his mother.

"But your father would not have been any different if she had lived, Joey; so perhaps God took her to save him. We must submit to the ways of God, my son, even if they do conflict with our own happiness."

"I am very glad that father is sp good, but I cannot help feeling sorry that Ruthie is gone."

"It is very lonely here, Joey, since she died, but she is happy with God and the holy angels."

"But I am so sorry that father hurt her, and I know that I never shall forget it."

"It was the liquor which your father drank that made him hurt Ruthie so badly. If he had never drunk it, such a bad affair would not have happened," replied Mrs. Martin sadly.

"I never will drink liquor as long as I live, nor cider either," said the boy.

"God help you to keep your good resolution, my son! Your father would never have fallen so low if he had made such a resolution and kept it."

"Father is coming now," said Joey; "and see what a large bundle he has got; I wonder what it is." And a half happy smile lit up the boy's face.

Mr. Martin entered the door, and gave the bundle to Joey, saying: "There is a present for you."

The boy eagerly tore off the thick brown paper, and a nice cap and pair of shoes fell out. Then there was a roll of cloth for an entire suit of clothes, and very pretty it was, too.

"I am so glad, for now I can go to Sabbath-school," said Joey.

"Yes; we will all go just as soon as I have earned money enough to buy some better clothes for your mother and myself," said Mr. Martin.

"How long will it take you, father?" asked Joey, thinking that it would be a long time before so much money could be obtained.

"Only a few weeks, I guess," was the answer.

"Why did you not get your clothes first, father?" asked the boy again. "I am sure you need them worse than I do."

"I do need them bad enough, but I want you to go to Sabbath-school right away. So learn the lesson for next Sabbath, and I guess your mother will try and get your clothes made by that time." And Mr. Martin tried to speak hopefully, but somehow his voice faltered, and tears came into his eyes.

Joey's heart was strangely moved at the sight, and so he stole gently up to his father, and, laying his soft hand upon the rough face, said: "Don't cry, father, any more about it; I know you would never have hurt Ruthie if you had not drinked cider up at Mr. Bentley's."

The man groaned sadly, but said nothing.

"It was real wicked for Mr. Bentley to give you any cider," said Joey; "and I don't believe that he is a good man at all."

"God will judge him justly at last," said Mrs. Martin; "so we will not condemn him."

Saturday night came, and Joey's clothes were all ready for him to wear; and the boy really began to act like himself once more. His lesson was all committed to memory, and he went up to his sleeping-room quite happy. Before he went, he had said to his mother: "If you and father had some better clothes so that you could go too, I should be real happy."

The boy did not know that a new twenty-dollar bill had just been placed in his mother's hand to be used to purchase clothes for herself.

He had just lain down to sleep when he heard a quick, firm tread up the gravel-walk that led to the house, and a low rap upon the door.

"That is Mr. Grey, I know; but I wonder what he came here for?" And as Joey was pondering this question, he fell into a quiet sleep.

It was indeed Mr. Grey, who came bearing a larger bundle than the one that James Martin had brought.

"I have brought you a present, James, which a few of us have been getto night to Joey, so you see your good deed has met with its own reward. Do not be afraid to accept the gift, for the money which purchased it was freely given. Friends will stand by you, James, if you will only try to do well." And saying this, Mr. Grey walked out of the room.

The package was undid, and an entire suit of clothes for a man was revealed. Tears came into the eyes of the grateful man as he looked after Mr. Grey, who was nearly out of sight.

"If I had only heeded his counsels during these wasted years of my life, this dark scene of misery would never have

been to blight all future happiness with its shadow of gloom. If God would forgive me, I could yet be happy with such friends as Mr. Grey around me."

"God will forgive you, James," replied his wife, in an eager voice.

"I am a murderer in his sight, Susan," he replied.

"I think that you are mistaken there, James. There were others connected with this transaction that are more guilty in his sight than you."

"But I performed the cruel deed, you know."

"Yes; after others prepared you to do it; and your part was performed when your reason and powers of mind were bewildered and confused. Their part was done when reason had its perfect sway, and all the thinking, reasoning powers of the soul in active operation. You sinned deeply, it is true, but all the load of guilt should not rest upon you."

"The sin of the past clings to me like some fearful dream, and the present seems vague and unreal, while the future is covered with a veil of mystery. I wish I knew where this affair will end," replied the husband despondingly.

"If you only keep the promise you made to Mr. Grey, you will be happy yet," was her low reply.

"I will try very hard to keep it, Susan, but the demon appetite still clings to me, and at times I feel weak and powerless as an infant. I tell you, I could not stand much temptation. I hope that no friend or foe will ever ask me to drink a drop of anything that can arouse the old appetite. If I should take one drink now, I know that I should go straight to ruin."

"Don't go where there is any possibility of being tempted, James," said his wife earnestly. "Shun temptation for Joey's sake, if for nothing else. Do not run the terrible risk of losing your own soul, by going where you might be tempted."

"That is just what Mr. Grey tells me, and I guess that he is right. I do mean

to let liquor alone, and, if God will only help me, I shall succeed."

"Have you asked him, James? You know there is a promise in his Word which says: 'Ask, and you shall receive.' The One who made this promise to men is able to keep it."

"Yes; I know he is, Susan; but I am a great sinner, and that promise was made for those who love and obey God."

"But you may love and obey God, James. I know that he will accept you, for he never turns away from those who seek to draw near unto him. If you only would give your heart to the Saviour, I should have no fears of your

falling, for he would uphold and sustain you. But if you trust in your own strength, you will assuredly fall, and go to ruin." And there was an earnestness in the wife's voice that fairly startled James Martin.

"But it seems a long step for me to take—to leave the lowest depths of sin, and reach the firm rock of Christianity. Perhaps I may reach it step by step if I am faithful in following the right way, which I mean to be."

"God saved the dying thief, and I am sure he would save you if you should cast yourself at his feet. Will you not bow with me in prayer here and now, and ask him to receive you?"

"You ask him, Susan, for me." And the repenting husband looked pleadingly towards the tearful wife. She bowed in humble prayer, and earnestly did she plead with God that he would save her husband, and lead him up to a better life. If he, too, had only called to the loving All-Father, he might have gained the strong rock, where the tempter would have beset him in vain.

## CHAPTER VIII.

THE PLEDGE.

HE next Sabbath, a large number of bright, cheerful faces were gathered in the old-fashioned church of Greenville to recite Bible lessons, and receive instruction in the

Sabbath-school. Mr. Grey was the superintendent of the school, and so, of course, it was a flourishing institution. As it was a bright sunny morning, all were present, and a more cheer-

ful, happy group could not well be found. The time had just arrived for the exercises to begin, when the door opened, and James Martin and his son entered. Joey was soon made welcome by a number of boys about his own age, and a seat found for him among the children. He looked quite happy, and a grateful smile came over his face for the kindness shown to him.

Mr. Martin was somewhat confused, and was about to go out of the church, when Mr. Grey beckoned him to a vacant seat, which he at once accepted.

The exercises were soon begun with prayer, and then a pleasant hymn

was sung. After this, the lessons were all recited, questions asked in relation to the same, and then Mr. Grey requested all to be silent, as he had a few words to say. He drew from his pocket a roll of paper with something written at the top of it, which he held up before his little audience, saying: "How many of our scholars wish to sign a temperance pledge? As many as wish to do so hold up your hands."

Nearly every hand in the room went up, and Mr. Grey smiled pleasantly as he saw how finely his plan was working.

"I will read it to you first, and then try to explain the nature of it, so that you may understand fully what you are doing." And so he read very slow-ly and distinctly: "We, the undersigned, do hereby agree to abstain from the use as a beverage of all alcoholic drinks, and also beer, wine, and cider. We also promise to abstain from using tobacco in any form; and, lastly, we agree never to take God's holy name in vain."

"So you see, children," he said, after reading the pledge, "if you write your name upon this paper, you are morally bound to do just as the pledge reads. It would be a violation of your honor, truthfulness, and principles should you do an act that you have pledged your-

selves not to do. So, unless you are certain that you can keep this pledge sacred, you had better not write your names upon the paper, for I should feel very badly if any of you should fail to do as you solemnly promise."

"I can do just as the pledge reads," said Willie Hammond, in a positive way.

"So can I," exclaimed a dozen more at the same time.

'I never swore in my life," said one who had not spoken.

"I hate tobacco," said another, "for the smell of it makes me sick."

"And I don't like cider only when it's new," said George Potter.

"But you can't drink it, even when it is new," answered Willie Hammond.

Mr. Grey was obliged to call the school to order, and, when all became quiet again, he said: "Drinking new cider would be a violation, and this is where some of you will be the most strongly tempted. I do not think that many of you would care to drink old cider, for it is not a very pleasant beverage for new beginners. The danger all lies in drinking sweet cider, and that is just what you must not do. Some look upon it as a very harmless drink, but many a drunkard will tell you that this was his first step in the wrong direction. It grows old

and sour so very slowly that you cannot detect any difference in the taste from day to day, and so, the first thing you know, it is found to contain alcohol. Now, I want each of you to make up your mind never to touch sweet cider before you write your name upon my paper. Those who cannot at once decide this question can have an opportunity next Sabbath to sign this pledge. I will now take the names of all who desire to sign it to-day; so please come forward."

About thirty boys and girls wished to sign the pledge then, and so their names were written upon the paper. Among them was found the name of Sidney

Bentley, which somewhat surprised Mr. Grey. But there was such an eager look resting upon the boy's face when he came forward to sign his name to the pledge, that Mr. Grey did not question his motives.

"I am very glad that you have signed this pledge," the kind superintendent whispered in his ear, as he was about to go back to his seat again. A grateful smile came over Sidney's face, and he replied in a low voice: "I mean to keep the pledge."

Frank Bentley, however, did not leave his seat, and, when Sidney came back, he said: "I am afraid father will not approve of what you have done." The happy look faded from the brother's face, and a sad expression came over it. He had not once thought that his father would be offended because he signed the pledge. "I wish that I had waited until I asked him," he said, in reply to Frank.

Joey Martin also signed the temperance pledge; but he had asked his father's consent before he went up to the little desk. "I know that you will keep it," said Mr. Grey to him.

After all of the names were written upon the paper, Mr. Grey asked the older persons who chanced to be present to help sustain the good work by signing their names also to the pledge.

A few complied readily with the request, while several others said that they would wait until the next Sabbath before they decided. As Mr. Martin had made no movement toward adding his name tothe list, Mr. Grey approached him with the paper, and asked him if he had not better be upon the safe side of the question. "I will think the matter over first, Mr. Grey," he replied, in a low voice. As it was no place to argue the question, Mr. Grey waited a moment, and then passed onward.

"I shall bring this paper every Sabbath to obtain new names," he said, as he dismissed the school. Joey and his father stayed to hear the sermon,

preached by the good pastor of Greenville. His text was, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." It was a beautiful discourse, but yet so plain and simple that a child might fully understand its truths. James Martin listened attentively, and more than once said to himself: "If this rest could only be mine!" and then the old sad thoughts would come back.

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## CHAPTER IX.

MR. BENTLEY DISSATISFIED.



R. JOHN BENTLEY
had met with much
trouble since James
Martin had refused to
work for him. In fact,
everything had gone
wrong, and it seemed

impossible to get matters righted. He had kept the boys at work in the hay-field, and so, of course, the corn went without hoeing. Then he did not get along very well in securing his hay, for both

of his boys could not perform as much work as James Martin. Mr. Bentley well knew that there was but a few men that could do the amount of work in a day that "old Jim," as he generally termed his unfortunate neighbor, always accomplished. James was a large, strong man, and his physical strength had not yet left him in consequence of his evil course. Then, he always worked with renewed energy when under the influence of Mr. Bentley's stimulating cider, so the money-loving farmer usually kept the old brown jug well filled with the hateful beverage. Another thing, also, that was something of much importance in

John Bentley's estimation was that Mr. Martin worked for him for one dollar per day, while other men that could not perform as much work asked one dollar and fifty cents. Cider was the secret of this also, as the farmer well knew; and, as this was a cheap beverage, he could well afford to supply the drunkard with the same. Nobody else that he could employ cared quite so much for cider as did James Martin, and so he could not find any one that would work for less than the usual price of ordinary men. Then, there had been other things that had annoyed farmer Bentley, and hindered his work. The weather had not been favorable,

and his hay had been damaged considerably by the sudden showers of rain that had not given much warning of their approach. Thomas, his hired man, who was employed by the month, had been sick two days, right in the midst of the best weather, and Mr. Bentley was obliged to hire another man, and pay him the usual price that others were receiving, to fill his place. And so the unfortunate farmer was a week later than his neighbors in securing his hay.

This was quite a blow to his pride, for he was a very ambitious man in regard to his farm-work, and could not well bear to see other people ahead

of him in any respect. No man in the neighborhood had a better farm than he possessed, and no one took more pains to keep everything in good order than John Bentley. Every year he had managed to save a large sum of money, which was well invested, and so he was growing richer each day. But he had not always been such a cold-hearted, money-loving man. In other days, ere Prosperity had opened her generous hand to him, he had been a very different man, and many had looked upon him as a model of honor and uprightness. He was called a kind, free-hearted man, and people all said that he was a Christian. This was

true, for he belonged to the little band of Christian workers in Greenville, and tried to do his duty. But in some way a change began to come over him. It was thought by those who knew him that prosperity in worldly things was the grand obstacle that so hedged up his pathway toward true happiness and usefulness. Perhaps this was true in a certain sense, but he always drank cider, beer, and wine, and so, of course, these helped crush the noble impulses of his soul. He seldom attended church, and gave less each year to help along benevolent enterprises. At last he did not go to the house of God at all, and finally requested that his

name be stricken from the church-book. It was true that he did not like to pay out his money to help support the Gospel, but perhaps this was not all the motive that caused him to with-draw from the church.

A few years went by, and then there was a general revival of religion in Greenville, and many passed from death unto life. Mr. Bentley was awakened at last, and again became a member of the old church. The money-loving spirit seemed to be almost subdued, for he gave quite freely of his ample means for a long time. Yet his love for these "light drinks," as he termed them, still clung to him, and this led

him astray; and soon he relapsed into a state of cold indifference in which he seemed likely to remain. But he still went to church regularly, and conformed to its rules; for John Bentley was a man who sought to be upon the popular side of every question. So he had drifted on year after year, conforming outwardly to Christian duties, while his love of gain and selfish appetite were consuming his soul.

So John Bentley was not in a very amiable mood the week following the Sabbath when the pledge was circulated. Frank watched for a favorable time to mention the fact, as his father had not heard of the transaction. So one day

near the close of the week he mentioned it to his father, saying that he had not yet signed the pledge, but had concluded to wait until the next Sabbath before he decided.

"Did your brother sign it?" asked Mr. Bentley quickly.

"Yes, father; but I guess he did not think at the time that you would care anything about it."

"Well, I'll teach him to think another time," replied the father very angrily. "He very well knows that I do not approve of the way that Mr. Grey goes on about temperance. That man is a perfect fool, to make the best of him. All he thinks about from

morning until night is temperance; but I wish that he would keep it out of the Sabbath-school. Don't you put your name to that pledge, and your brother's will not long remain there; I don't send you to Sabbath-school to become temperance fanatics; and, if such proceedings are not stopped at once, you will not go any more. Grey has bothered me enough already with his temperance work. If he had attended to his own business, Jim Martin would have remained, and then my hay would not have been injured so badly. Twentyfive dollars will not amend the injury that he has done me. And saying this, the angry, excited man walked away.

"I'll go this very night, and tell Grey what I think of him," he muttered to himself as he walked along.

True to his word, he started that night, after the chores were all done, to make Mr. Grey a brief visit. Mr. Grey was somewhat surprised as he admitted his visitor into the pleasant little sitting-room of the farm-house.

"Glad to see you, neighbor Bentley," he said, as he extended his hand. "Walk in and be seated, if you please." And a real smile of friendly welcome lit up Mr. Grey's face.

For a moment, John Bentley was half ashamed of his errand; but, calling to his aid all his false courage, he replied:

"Yes; I will sit down a few moments, as I have a few words to say in relation to the Sabbath-school. To tell the truth, Grey, I cannot keep quiet any longer, and so I came to the conclusion to see you myself, and have this matter righted."

If there is anything about the Sabbath-school that is not right, Mr. Bentley, I will do all in my power to remove the obstacle to our common prosperity. Please inform me what it is."

"I was informed that you are urging our Sabbath-school scholars to sign a temperance pledge which you have written. Is this true, Mr. Grey?"

"Partially true, Mr. Bentley. I first

endeavored to explain to them the nature of the pledge, and then I invited all who were confident that they could keep it sacred to sign the same. I am happy to state to you that I obtained the names of about thirty of our scholars, and of several adults beside. This is a pretty good beginning, Mr. Bentley."

"A pretty bad one, I am afraid; and this is the work that I think ought to be stopped at once. It will ruin our Sabbath-school, if not the scholars themselves." And here Mr. Bentley suddenly stopped.

"Why, neighbor Bentley, you do not think that there is anything bad in the principles of temperance, do you?" And a look of surprise came over the speaker's face.

"The principles are well enough, I suppose," answered the visitor slowly; "but I do not think that the Sabbathschool is the place in which to teach them"

" I supposed that we should teach everything that is good, neighbor, and warn our children against performing anything which is productive of evil. This is the grand object of Sabbathschools, if I understand the matter rightly."

"People do not all agree as to what is evil. Now, what I consider as a harmless custom, such as drinking cider and

home-made wine, you look upon as a terrible evil, and fight against it with all your power; and, instead of teaching the more essential principles of right and truth in our Sabbath-school, you have carried your strange notions there, and are trying to get others to embrace them."

"Do you not regard intemperance as a great sin?" enquired Mr. Grey.

"Yes; in its general sense; but I do not believe that the harmless act of occasionally drinking a glass of cider or wine has anything to do with drunken-I like to see intelligent men consistent in all things. Anybody can go into extremes upon either side of the question."

"Is it always safe to drink cider or wine, Mr. Bentley?" asked Mr. Grey, in a meaning voice.

"It may not be always, for there may be exceptions to a general rule; yet, in nine cases out of ten, I think that it is perfectly safe to drink cider or wine."

"I think it is exactly the reverse of this, for in nine cases out of ten I am almost sure there is danger. But allowing your view of the question to be correct, would it not be better to try and shun the danger that awaits the tenth imbiber of cider, beer, and wine? Is not a human soul worth saving? And, as Christian men, should we not forego the pleasure of sipping these light

drinks, if by so doing we can prevent a weak brother from falling into the pit of death? What say you, neighbor Bentley?"

"You take a very serious view of this matter, and I think that I will not stay to reason the case with you. I am very sorry that you have introduced this matter in the Sabbath-school, and I cannot allow my boys to attend the same if you teach things that I do not approve of. You may erase the name of my youngest son from the paper that you call a pledge." And here the speaker arose to go.

"I am very sorry that you are opposed to the teaching of temperance principles in our Sabbath-school, for I had hoped that you would assist us in our good work. I am going to propose the plan of purchasing a temperance library for our scholars, as our books that we have had so long are nearly worn out; but we cannot hope for any assistance from you, if you do as you say."

"This is the climax of all your strange actions, Mr. Grey. I never heard of such a thing before. Next you will discard the Bible from the school, and have some temperance book in its place," answered Mr. Bentley.

"No; we will keep our old Bible,

for that is the very best temperance book that can be found. We are going to carry out its teachings in this respect as in all others. And do you not think, as Christian men, we ought to make a movement in this direction? Little Ruth Martin might have been alive had there been no such a thing as intemperance. And I think, to come strictly to the truth, her death was caused by this harmless cider drinking. Don't you think so, neighbor Bentley?"

The visitor started as though he had been struck, and then replied: "I think that he would have got intoxicated that night if he had not drunk a drop of cider. He always goes to the tavern for whiskey when he works in the hay-field." And here Mr. Bentley retreated to the door.

"He did not go for liquor when at work for me, for I did not give him any cider to arouse his appetite for the same. And I truly hope no man will ever tempt him with any again."

"It is getting late, Mr. Grey, and I cannot stay any longer to argue this question," replied Bentley, opening the door.

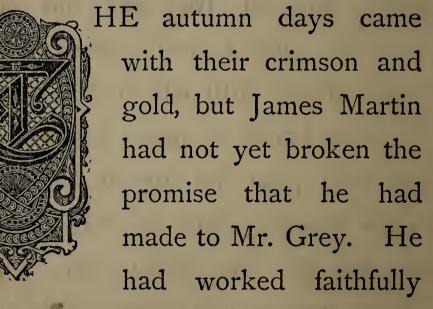
"Just a few more words before you go, Mr. Bentley, in regard to your boys. Perhaps the course you are now following in relation to this subject

may be the cause that will lead them to ruin. I should hate to run the risk that you do."

"I am not fearful in regard to my boys becoming drunkards, Mr. Grey," he replied coldly, and then passed out of the door.

## CHAPTER X.

THE DREAM — A VISIT TO THE BEECHWOODS.



for his kind employer, and the money that had been paid to him was wisely expended in making improvements about the old home. A new fence had been built in front of the house, and all of the weeds and brambles that had grown up in the little yard were torn up by their roots, and flower-beds made along the walk. It was too late in the season to sow many flower-seeds, and so Joey set out several rows of bright-eyed pansies, which would bloom until late in the autumn.

"It is better to have flowers all of one kind than not any at all," he said to his mother, while he was preparing the soil for the hardy little pansies. "Next year we will begin a little earlier to attend to the cultivation of flowers."

"Yes; if nothing happens to blight

our plans for the future," replied his mother.

"Mother, do you think that father will ever drink any more liquor?" enquired the boy one day, while a shadow came over his face at the thought.

"I hope not, my son; but why do you ask?"

"Because I dreamed last night that father came home intoxicated. It seemed so real that, for a long time after I waked up this morning, I thought that it was true, and I cried for joy when I found at last that it was only a dream. But I have kept thinking about it all day, and I cannot get it out of my mind. I thought little Ruthie had come back,

and she tried to keep father from doing you and me any harm; but he did not pay any attention to her cries and sobs, and at last turned towards her, and struck her a cruel blow. I thought that the blood ran down her face, and the sad sight only made him worse; for he struck her again and again until she was dead."

Joey stopped here, for his face was deathly white, and he shook like a leaf.

- "What is the matter, my son?" exclaimed Mrs. Martin, springing toward him.
- "Nothing; only it has seemed to me all day that father did come home intoxi-

cated; but I suppose that it was only a dream," he replied, trying to look cheerful.

"Do not let a dream trouble you, Joey, or borrow any trouble for the future." And Mrs. Martin spoke cheerfully.

Just at that moment, Edward Grey was seen coming towards the house, and so a real cheerful look came over Joey's face as he rushed out to greet his old friend.

"I am real glad to see you, Edward!" exclaimed Joey; "and I hope that you can stay all the afternoon."

"I am a-going over into the beechwoods this afternoon, and I called to see if your mother will let you go too," said Edward.

"I know she will; so just wait until I run and ask her."

And Joey bounded back into the room which he had just left. The mother gave her consent for him to go, really glad that something had occurred to make him forget the sorrow that had in some way clouded his happiness.

"Come home before dark, Joey," she only said, as he started out upon his pleasant excursion. The boy promised, and then started for the old woods that were glowing with the beauteous hues of autumn.

"I wonder if the beechnuts have begun to fall yet?" enquired Joey.

"I don't know; but we can find out when we get there. There have not been many hard frosts to open the burrs, although the leaves upon the trees are red and brown."

Just then the boys came in sight of Mr. Bentley's large cornfield, where they saw Frank and Sidney engaged in husking the bright golden ears of corn. The corn had been cut and left in large shocks, which stood thickly all over the field, and the boys found that it was no easy task to tear the dry husks from so many ears of corn.

"Let us stop a little while and rest us

when we get where they are at work," said Edward.

Joey consented, and so in a few moments the boys were talking and laughing in a pleasant manner.

"It is real nice to have visitors when a fellow is at work," said Sidney to Joey.

"I am glad that we happened to see you," replied Joey. "We had started to go over in the beech-woods to see if the beechnuts have begun to fall yet, but, when we saw you, we thought that we would stop and visit with you a little while."

"I am glad you did, for it is pretty lonesome work to sit here and husk corn from morning until night."

"It is not very hard work, is it, Sidney?" enquired Joey.

"No; not very hard for a day or two, but it makes my arms and shoulders ache to work so steadily, and I have blistered my hands in tearing off the husks." And the boy held up his hands.

"I am sorry for you, Sidney, and I wish that you could go with us over to the beech-woods," said Joey.

"I wish that I could, but that is impossible, so I will not think of it. Perhaps father will give us a half-holiday after the corn is all husked."

"How long will it take you to finish

husking these shocks of corn?" asked Edward, looking over the field.

"A long while if we have to do it all alone; but father is thinking about having a "husking-bee" some afternoon and evening; and, if he does, we shall finish it pretty quickly. The village boys would like no better fun than to come and help us, for we should have a lively time. You and Joey will come if we have one, will you not?" asked Frank.

- "I don't know until I ask father. If he is willing, I will come, and I think that Joey can come, too."
- "Of course your father will let you come if you wish, for you go just where

you like, while we have to work all of the time, only in the winter when school keeps." And Frank looked a little sadly.

"It is too bad," said Joey, in a sympathizing voice. "You don't even go to Sabbath-school, and I should think that your father would let you go to that, if nowhere else."

"He did not like it because Mr. Grey wished the scholars to sign a temperance pledge. He would not let us sign it or go, because the other boys signed it. I am real sorry, but I can drink sweet cider, you know, while the boys that signed the pledge cannot. So you see the old saying is

true that "There is no loss so great but what there is some small gain." And Frank laughed the matter off quite gaily.

"It is a very small gain, I am sure," answered Edward. "I am real glad I signed the pledge, and I mean to keep it just as long as I live."

"You are a temperance boy, Edward," said Frank," and that makes the difference, you know."

"And perhaps I'll be a temperance man; who knows?" he answered.

"I wish that I could be a temperance boy," said Sidney; "but there is no use in trying, so I shall drink cider and wine."

- "Perhaps you will become a drunk ard if you do," answered Edward.
- "I guess that we had better start along, if we are going to the beechwood this afternoon," said Joey.
- "I guess so, too," answered Edward.
  "Good-by, Frank and Sidney."
- "Come to our 'husking-bee,' if we have one," Frank replied pleasantly.

The boys hurried away to the shady woods where the tall beech-trees stood so gracefully together. They did not succeed in finding many beechnuts, however, yet a merry time they had together. Joey hardly thought of his unpleasant dream, as there was no chance to do so with such a happy,

fun-loving companion as Edward Grey. The sun was just disappearing behind the western hills when the boys returned home, and soon the events of the day were all forgotten in quiet sleep.

## CHAPTER XI.

"THE HUSKING-BEE."



E are going to have our 'husking-bee' to-morrow afternoon and evening, and I have called to ask your father and you to come," said Frank

Bentley to Joey a day or two after the visit to the cornfield and woods.

"I'll go if mother will consent to it," answered Joey.

"I guess that she will be willing;

come early if you can." And saying this, Frank hurried away.

"I guess that he is going to ask Mr. Grey and Edward," said Joey to himself as he walked into the house.

His mother was seated by the window as usual, engaged in sewing. She did not hear Frank Bentley's errand, for the door was closed, and the boys were near to the gate.

"Mother, Mr. Bentley is a-going to have a 'husking-bee' to-morrow afternoon and evening, and Frank has just been here to invite father and me to go. He is going to ask all the men and boys in the village, and I guess he is gone there now to invite them."

- "Did he ask you to go?" Mrs. Martin enquired, before Joey had finished his sentence.
- "Yes. Are you willing that I should go?"
- "I do not think that it will be a very good place for you, my son," was the answer.
- "Why, mother?" he asked, a disappointed look coming over his face.
- "Because every one that goes there will be tempted to drink of Mr. Bentley's new cider."
- "Frank did not say anything about the cider," replied Joey.
- "But it will be there, and the men and boys will drink it pretty freely, too.

It is not a good place for the boys to go who have signed the pledge, for they will be strongly tempted, and I truly hope that your father will not conclude to go."

"I hope so, too; but do you think, mother, that a single glass of sweet cider would do him any injury?"

"I am afraid it would, Joey; and I hope that no one will ever tempt him with even a glass of sweet cider. It is a dangerous beverage at best."

Nothing more was said in regard to the "husking-bee," although it was not forgotten by either Mrs. Martin or her son. Nothing was said to Mr. Martin that night as he came from his work,

and, as he did not mention it, his wife began to hope that he had not been invited. But she was mistaken, for he had received an invitation to go, and, thinking of no danger, he had concluded to join the company of men and boys who went by the farm-house of Mr. Grey. It was nearly evening when he informed his employer that he thought of going over to help Bentley a little while, just to show him that he did not owe him any old grudge.

"I would not go, James," said Mr. Grey, in an earnest voice; "you will be tempted in a way that you cannot resist. Bentley will have plenty of cider

there, and I am afraid that you will get into trouble."

Mr. Martin laughed heartily, and then replied: "So you think that I have no mind of my own, and will yield to temptation just like some silly boy? I think that cider has caused me enough trouble already, and I guess that I shall not touch it again very soon."

He spoke so decidedly that Mr. Grey was almost sorry that he had said any such distrustful words to him, and so he only added: "Perhaps you will come away all right, but, as all of your old barroom friends will be there, I thought that I would warn you."

"I will try pretty hard not to get into

trouble, Mr. Grey." And so he walked away. He informed Joey, who stood by the little gate, that he was going up to Mr. Bentley's to stay an hour, and would be back in good season.

"Tell your mother not to borrow any trouble about me." And saying this, he hurried along toward the cornfield of Mr. Bentley.

He found a large company of men and boys there, all busily engaged in husking corn. The shocks had all been brought together, and the yellow ears thrown into one heap, as Mr. Bentley said it would be less difficult to load it into the wagon to be drawn to the large corn-crib.

"Halloa, Martin, glad that you have come!" exclaimed a dozen voices at a time; and many a hand was reached toward him.

He greeted them all kindly, and was soon engaged with the rest in the pleasant business of husking corn.

He was the hero of the evening, for his old bar-room friends were making an attempt to lead him back into the bondage that he had just escaped. They played their part well, and their poor victim was completely blinded.

Soon a voice called out: "Pass the cider-jug this way, if you please."

It was handed to the speaker, and, after turning out a glass of the same

to drink himself, he passed the jug and goblet along. One or two of the boys did not drink, and Mr. Martin noticed that they were some of those who had signed the pledge in the Sabbathschool. At last the jug was placed in his hands, and so he passed it to the next.

- "Nothing but sweet cider," said one; "and I tell you it is capital."
- "I guess that I will not drink any," he said, trying to get the hateful jug out of his hands.

But the man who sat next to him did not touch it, but said: "Take a drink yourself before you give it to me; it will not hurt you, Martin."

And still he refused to take the jug from the trembling hands.

"No; I think I will not drink any," he said again.

"Why, sweet sider would not hurt a baby; so don't be so foolish, Martin. If it was sour cider, we would not ask you to drink any. Only one taste, just to be polite."

"Perhaps he has signed Grey's temperance pledge," said another, in a sneering tone.

"I don't believe he has," was the answer; "for I know he has too much good sense to sign a paper that will not allow a man to drink sweet cider. Any one who would sign such a paper

as that must be a perfect fool. If he had signed a pledge that would not allow him to drink any intoxicating drink, I should not have blamed him; but to forbid a man to take a glass of sweet cider is perfect absurdity."

And here the speaker took the jug, and, after turning out some of the tempting beverage, he held it to the lips of James Martin.

He tried to turn his head away, and thus keep from performing the sin, but he seemed paralyzed and unable to move. Just then the tempter invisible whispered in his ear: "Take one sip, just to make them let you alone."

He yielded, and was lost. It is

needless to say that the contents of the jug were mixed cider, a large portion old sour cider, with a small quantity of new.

The corn was soon all husked, but, alas! poor James Martin had fallen, and was again a victim of rum. He went to the village tavern with his old associates, and before midnight was asleep in the landlord's barn.

James Martin was not the only one that had been deceived by the mixed cider, for Frank Bentley, too, became a victim of the plot, and drank until he was half intoxicated. His father did not know that the cider had been mixed, and was very angry when he found

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it out. Perhaps the events of that night removed, to a small degree, his blindness, and convinced him that he had made a terrible mistake.

## CHAPTER XII.

#### THE DEATH-SHADOW AGAIN.



O words can describe the grief and sorrow that again overshadowed the drunkard's home. All hope and sunlight at once faded from the lifepath of the poor wife,

who had watched and prayed so long. It seemed that, when he fell, never more the sable clouds of sorrow would be lifted to let the blessed sunlight of happiness fall again over her pathway.

She tried to keep from yielding to the grim phantom of despair, and still cling to the future; but it was a hard matter to rise above the darkness that surrounded her. She tried to forgive Mr. Bentley the part that he had performed in wrenching the little happiness that lay between her present sorrow and the dark days of the past, yet rebellious thoughts would come unbidden to her soul. Days passed onward, and the storm deepened. Her husband had hardly seen a sober hour since he drank the "mixed cider" at the husking-bee. But for some cause, he did not return home during his carousal, but remained the most of the time at the tayern. Mr.

Grey was owing him a few dollars when he began his sad debauch, but was obliged to pay it all into his hands, and was not allowed the privilege of retaining a single shilling to give to Mrs. Martin. Soon it was all given to the cruel landlord for fiery poison, and then James Martin was obliged to go to work again. He did not return to Mr. Grey's, but worked wherever he could get a chance, spending his money just as fast as he earned it. During one of his drunken carousals, he fell and sprained his ankle very badly, and otherwise injured himself, and thus he was taken home in this sad condition. He was powerless, and so was obliged to remain

upon his bed, and bear the hard pain that tormented him. He lay very quiet for a few hours, and then the old burning appetite for strong drink came to him again, and he raved, cursed, and screeched like a madman. He ordered Joey to go to Smith's, and obtain some liquor, declaring he would kill him if he refused to obey. Mrs. Martin begged and remonstrated, but all in vain, for he sprang from his bed, and declared he would murder them both unless Joey started that moment for the liquor. It was late in the evening, and a wild November storm was raging fearfully without. The rain had been pouring down all day, and the little creek that

ran between the houses of Mr. Grey and Martin was swollen and rapid.

"You will have to go, Joey," whispered Mrs. Martin to him. "Go as far as Mr. Grey's, and tell him to come."

The boy started out into the deep darkness of the night, and, as he went through the door, his mother said, "Be careful about crossing the creek, for the water is very high."

Joey started out, and the mother remained with the raving madman. An hour passed by, and neither Joey nor Mr. Grey appeared in the dimly lighted room where the trembling wife and mother was anxiously waiting.

"It is time for Joey to return," she

said aloud, not thinking that the husband would hear her.

"I'll kill him when he does come the lazy brat!" exclaimed the unfeeling man.

Another hour passed away, and no footsteps had been heard, and Mrs. Martin was half paralyzed with fear. Her husband had cursed and sworn in a frightful manner, but she scarcely heeded his words in her strange foreboding of evil. At last she seized a shawl, and, wrapping it about her, started out in the sobbing tempest. She walked swiftly along until she came to the creek, and then she discovered that the bridge was swept away by the rushing waters.

"He is drowned!" she said. And then her loud shrieks blended with the hoarse, rushing winds. Mr. Grey heard them, and in a few moments was upon his way to the scene of trouble. The lantern that he brought showed that every board had been swept away, leaving nothing but the timber upon which the planks had rested.

"Joey is drowned," she said, in a strange, hollow voice, as she looked into the mad, rushing water. The alarm was given, and a number of men searched several hours for the body, but did not find it. Mr. Grey went to the lonely cottage, and informed the raving father in regard to the fate of his son. In a

moment he was calm, and lay silent and quiet until morning. When daylight came, the search was renewed, and in a little while the body of the dead boy was found. Tenderly it was borne to the little cottage, and dressed for the grave. Many a strong man wept as the long wet curls were straightened and laid back in graceful beauty upon the white brow.

It was never known just how Joey met his sad fate, but it was generally supposed that, as he ran along in the darkness, and blinded with his own tears, he failed to observe that the bridge had been swept away, and so stepped directly into the mad rushing waters. "This is another victim of the terrible curse of our nation," said one, while gazing upon the pure white face of the dead boy.

"John Bentley's cider caused his death," said another.

"Just as it did little Ruthie's," observed Mr. Grey.

Mrs. Martin was calm and composed as she had been when little Ruth had died, while her husband seemed transformed into an iceberg. He shed no tear, he expressed no sorrow for his cruel deed, and seemed as indifferent to the sad scene as the rocks upon the hill-side.

Mr. John Bentley also looked upon

the dead face, and for the first time seemed sad and bowed down with remorse and sorrow. He said nothing, however, but walked slowly away.

Little Joey Martin was laid away in the churchyard by the side of the dead sister. The autumn leaves rustled sadly along by the new-made grave, and the November winds sighed mournfully around the narrow resting-place. "He rests in peace," the good pastor said, as he turned away from the little mound.

In a few days, Mr. Bentley disposed of his cider, and not a barrel was left in his cellar. Smith the landlord bought it of him, and so it was removed to the tayern.

"He has only partially repented yet,"
Mr. Grey said, as he saw the barrels
borne away. "If he had wholly repented, he would have thrown his cider
in the creek, and not have let the base
landlord deal it out to others. He has
disposed of it because he was afraid
of the injury that it might do to his own
boys."

Alas! John Bentley was too late, for the seed was sown, and must spring up and bear fruit.

# CHAPTER XIII.

### CLOSING EVENTS.

E now step over the long space of five years, to note the great changes that had been wrought in the quiet little village of Greenville.

The greatest change

for good that had taken place was that public sentiment in regard to the grand principles of temperance had been entirely transformed. The scales had at last fallen from the eyes that had long

been blinded to the sad results that ever follow the fearful practice of drinking the poisonous beverage of death. This change had partially been wrought by the untiring efforts of Mr. Grey, who had labored with all his power for the noble cause of temperance. The scoffs and sneers of his enemies had not turned him aside from the path of duty, and so the good seed that he had scattered abroad upon the earth at last began to spring up and bear fruit. Strange to say, every boy and girl who had signed the temperance pledge in the Sabbath-school had remained true to the obligation, while nearly all who refused to do so had yielded to temptation, and

some had been led far into the paths of sin. The death of Ruth and Joey Martin had also served to awaken the good people of Greenville, for the sad scenes connected with their death had not been forgotten.

Five years had also wrought a great change in James Martin, for he never drank another drop of liquor after Joey had been brought home pale and dead. He fully realized his guilt in the transaction, yet he well knew, if he again betrayed signs of repentance, that none would place any confidence in him, after he had fallen once, so he held in check the fierce storm that swept over his soul, and went away to reform. It was more

than a year before he returned to his lonely, sorrowing wife to ask her forgiveness for the great wrong he had done. He had sought and found the Saviour in his absence, for he well knew that, if he trusted in his own strength to stand, he would fall again. He was freely forgiven by her, and hope again in some degree shone over her pathway. He united with the church, and signed the very temperance pledge that he had refused to write his name upon a few months before. He saw at last that he could not stand alone in his human weakness, and so became willing to adopt any measure which would help him along. A little bright-eyed baby

had come to the home of the reformed drunkard, and it was then that the old look of happiness came back to the mother's eyes, as she clasped the new-found treasure to her heart. This little lambkin was not taken from her, for the curse that once shadowed her life had departed. She sometimes wept by the little green graves in the old church-yard, which were guarded by two marble slabs, but she always left the sacred spot resolving to forget the dark pictures of the past, and live for the future.

The fifth summer which came after Joey Martin had died, a sad scene was witnessed in the house of John Bentley.

Frank, his oldest son, but yet a boy, died a wretched drunkard. The appetite which was created by cider while yet a little boy could not be subdued when manhood began to weave its chaplet of glory around his brow. When the cider was removed to the cellar of landlord Smith, Frank would go slyly there to obtain a few drinks. Soon he drank beer also, and then rum and brandy were chosen next. His father found it all out at last, but it was too late, for the boy refused to obey his parent. He was then driven from home, and so out into the world he went; to rush onward to ruin. He went fearfully fast, and was soon wandering away

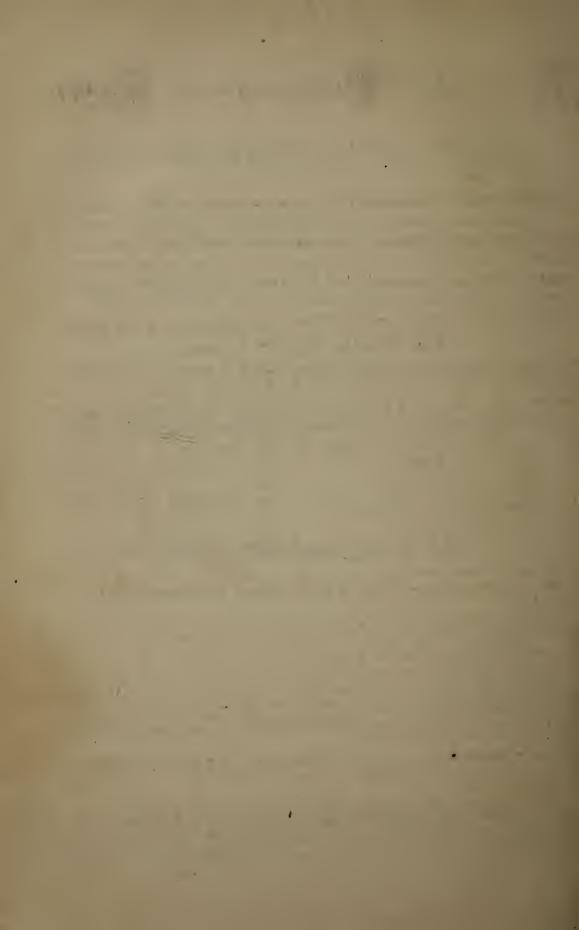
out upon the wilds of sin, a thing of shame and misery. Disease laid its hand upon him, and then he crept home to die. His father's pity at last was aroused, and he took the outcast in to care for him as he lingered in the dark death-valley.

"It was the works of your hand that brought me here," the boy said, in a husky voice, when his eyes were growing dim in death.

"Yes, yes," the wretched father groaned; "I see it all now; but I was blinded then. Oh! it was a fearful mistakė!"

"Yes, a terrible mistake," the dying boy said, and then passed away.

He, too, was buried in the old churchyard of Greenville, and often a sad, palefaced man was seen wandering around the low grave. John Bentley came forth at last from his grave of remorse, and went out into the world to join the grand army of temperance workers, and perform the work that duty enforced upon him. He tries to forget the sad mistake he made, and atone for the past by laboring for God and humanity.



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# ational Temperance



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